

Kettlestone Development

<http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/local/west-des-moines/2014/10/21/interchange-waukee-west-des-moines-interstate/17604129/>

By about this time next year, you could be pulling off Interstate Highway 80 at the new Grand Prairie Parkway exit.

Waukee and West Des Moines broke ground Wednesday on the new interchange, about four miles west of the west mixmaster.

For the two suburbs, the new interstate exit means the prospect of developing an entirely new commercial corridor. Waukee has produced a master plan that lays out 30 years' worth of office, retail and residential development.

Interchange drivers will be able to access the technology corridor in West Des Moines to the south, and the future Kettlestone development in Waukee to the north.

"Grand Prairie Parkway is an example of how regional collaboration efforts can have an abundant return on investment," West Des Moines Mayor Steve Gaer said in a statement. "The interchange will open thousands of acres for new development, a new north-south route for traveling throughout the western Des Moines metropolitan area, and most importantly, additional opportunities for individuals and businesses to thrive in Iowa."

Held on the Grand Prairie Parkway Bridge connecting Waukee and West Des Moines, officials from both cities, local business leaders and Congressman Tom Latham took part in the ceremony.

The collaborative project has a price tag of more than \$23 million. The cities will share the cost equally.

"We can get more accomplished by working together," Waukee Mayor Bill Peard said in a statement. "We are excited that working with West Des Moines has been so successful and that the results will drive further growth in the central Iowa economy."

The extension of Grand Prairie Parkway from University Avenue to Ashworth Road, north of the interstate in Waukee, is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2014. The interstate ramps and the stretch of road from the interchange to Ashworth Road are scheduled to open in late 2015.

The interchange includes an innovative diverging diamond design — the first-of-its-kind in Iowa — that is known in other parts of the country for improving safety and allowing for increased vehicle capacity.

About 12,000 vehicles a day are expected to travel Grand Prairie Parkway in Waukee when it opens, said Dan Dutcher, Waukee's community and economic development director.

Dutcher said he expects travel-oriented businesses like convenience stores and restaurants to begin popping up around the interchange in 2016.

The two cities have been working on the project since the early 1990s. Dutcher described working with federal and state transportation agencies as frustratingly slow. But “it seems like the past 10 or 15 years have gone by fast,” he said.